

Public Disclosure Commission Strategic Plan

Revised August 2003

Mission Statement

The Public Disclosure Commission was created and empowered by Initiative of the People to provide timely and meaningful public access to information about the financing of political campaigns, lobbyist expenditures, and the financial affairs of public officials and candidates, and to ensure compliance with disclosure provisions, contribution limits, campaign practices and other campaign finance laws.

Vision Statement

We build public confidence in the political process and government.

Statutory Authority

The Public Disclosure Commission is created pursuant to RCW 42.17.350. The Commission's powers and duties are set forth in RCW 42.17.360, 42.17.365, 42.17.367, 42.17.370, 42.17.395 and other provisions of chapter 42.17 RCW.

Goals and Objectives

1. Identify and implement strategies to make enforcement efforts more effective; evaluate results.

Objective: Secure passage of legislation that increases the PDC's penalty authority and modifies the 45-day letter period to 60 business days.

- 1-1 Arrange introduction of agency request legislation with bi-partisan support of legislative policy committee members. Work with prime sponsors and policy committee chair and staff to ensure committee hearing and favorable executive action. Educate Rules Committee members about legislation; secure passage from Rules Committee. Work with leadership and staff to schedule floor action and secure passage (without adverse amendments).

Who: Executive Director, Director of Public Outreach, Commissioners

Timeline: 2003 Legislative Session

Objective: Prioritize enforcement functions and continue to modify processes to speed resolution of complaints.

- 1-2 Perform a sufficient number of audits to provide a statistically valid finding regarding the degree of compliance with filing deadlines.

Who: Director of Compliance and Political Finance Specialists

Timeline: Ongoing (for following reports: F-1, L-2, L-3, C-1/F-1, and 7-day pre-general C-4 reports)

- 1-3 Complete routine, non-complex investigations within 90 days of receiving complaint.

Who: Director of Compliance and Political Finance Specialists

Timeline: Ongoing

- 1-4 Create and implement via rule-making standardized penalty mechanism (e.g., grid) for late filers and other brief enforcement hearing cases.

Who: Assistant Director (w/ Assistant Attorney General, review by Executive Director, final approval by Commission)

Timeline: January 2004

- 1-5 Review, identify and adopt necessary amendments to enforcement process rules (WAC 390-37).

Who: Assistant Director (w/ Assistant Attorney General, Director of Public Outreach, review by Executive Director, final approval by Commission)

Timeline: January 2004

- 1-6 Conduct random desk and field audits of campaigns and lobbyists/
lobbyist employers.
Who: Director of Compliance and Political Finance Specialists
Timeline: In conformance with Audit Plan

2. Enhance public access and awareness of PDC reports and data through evolving technology.

Objective: Continue to develop and revise user-friendly, platform independent, Internet-based electronic filing programs for persons reporting under chapter 42.17 RCW.

- 2-1 Seek additional funding for maintenance of software programs and updating Information Technology infrastructure to ensure security and reliability of service.
Who: Executive Director (w/ Chief Technology Officer)
Timeline: 2003 Legislative Session

- 2-2 Recruit and consult with filer focus groups during the development or revision of the various filer reporting programs in order to address the specific needs of users.
Who: Chief Technology Officer (w/ Director of Public Outreach)
Timeline: Ongoing

- 2-3 Conduct electronic filing training sessions upon request and within available resources and according to a schedule that corresponds with:
- the start of legislative session (lobbyists),
 - the February deadline for lobbyist employer reports,
 - the time frame for filing declarations of candidacy,
 - the April 15 due date for the annual financial affairs statement, and
 - other times that meet filer needs.
- Who: Chief Technology Officer (w/ Director of Public Outreach)
Timeline: As specified above

Objective: Create, make available and publicize political spending data, information and trend analysis for easy public consumption and use.

- 2-4 Generate dynamic reports regarding lobbying and campaign activity that answer frequently asked media and citizen questions.
Who: Chief Technology Officer, Webmaster and Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Lobbying: Jan-June; Campaign Finance: July-November

- 2-5 Offer media briefings to highlight Web site information.
Who: Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Lobbying--January; Campaign Finance--July

3. Implement Standardized Communication Practices.

Objective: Implement general and specialized communication practices.

- 3-1 Develop and implement communication protocols for a) routine activities, including brief enforcement hearings, PDC News, COGEL articles and training schedules, and b) emerging issues and events, including conclusion of major investigations, new electronic filing software, court decisions, and results of national assessments of disclosure agencies.
Who: Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Routine activities -- October 2002; Emerging issues/events -- Ongoing
- 3-2 Distribute media notices regarding upcoming filing dates.
Who: Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Ongoing
- 3-3 Maintain agency-wide workload calendar to assure timely task completion.
Who: Director of Administration
Timeline: Ongoing

Objective: Identify and involve stakeholders who support advancing PDC's mission and goals.

- 3-4 Recruit representatives from League of Women Voters, Common Cause, Allied Daily Newspapers and other public interest groups to become involved in PDC-related issues.
Who: Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Ongoing

Objective: Optimize Commission and staff opportunities for educating members of the public, legislators and filers about the importance of disclosure laws.

- 3-5 Schedule and conduct as many presentations as possible given available resources.
Who: Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Ongoing

4. Increase Commission and staff capacity to meet future challenges.

Objective: Maximize appropriate staff and commission training opportunities within available resources.

- 4-1 Review Department of Personnel training opportunities to improve the skill level of all staff.
Who: Director of Administration
Timeline: At least quarterly

Objective: Develop succession plan.

- 4-2 Identify staff retirement vacancies that may occur during the next three to five years, evaluate existing skills and abilities of potential internal applicants, provide training opportunities to augment existing capabilities.
Who: Executive Director, Assistant Director, Chief Technology Officer
Timeline: July 2003

- 4-3 Promote rotation of commission leadership roles through exposure to increased responsibilities; e.g., vice chair or other commission member will conduct or observe brief enforcement hearings on occasion in preparation for assuming position of chair.
Who: Commission chair and members
Timeline: Ongoing

Objective: Support diversity on Commission and within agency.

- 4-4 When staff vacancies occur, notify Human Rights Commission, Commission on Asian Pacific American Affairs, Commission on African-American Affairs and Commission on Hispanic Affairs to seek their assistance in informing diverse audiences of available positions.
Who: Director of Administration
Timeline: When recruiting to fill staff vacancies

- 4-5 Annually notify legislative leaders and stakeholder groups of upcoming Commission vacancy, inviting them to submit recommendations to the Governor's Office.
Who: Director of Administration (for Commission Chair's signature)
Timeline: November

Objective: Explore and establish partnerships within government to better leverage and exchange knowledge and resources.

- 4-6 Improve collection procedures by: a) working with Department of General Administration, Office of Financial Management and/or

Department of Revenue on collection efforts; and b) joining multi-agency effort to change law regarding collection of agency final orders to streamline the collection process and reduce state expenditures.

Who: Executive Director and Assistant Director (in conjunction with Assistant Attorneys General)

Timeline: July 2003

- 4-7 Build communication and collaboration between PDC political finance specialists and AGO paralegals in order to increase efficiency and avoid duplication of effort.
Who: Director of Compliance
Timeline: Ongoing
- 4-8 Continue to build constructive relationships with the Governor's Office, Legislators and legislative staff.
Who: Commissioners, Executive Director, Director of Public Outreach
Timeline: Ongoing